

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 647

By Norris

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend directors T.J. Martin and Dan Lindsay and co-producer Rich Middlemas on their documentary, *Undefeated*, capturing the 2012 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly pause in their deliberations to recognize those stunning masterpieces of documentary filmmaking that capture the spirit of our citizens and impart our collective narrative to audiences far and wide; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable documentary is *Undefeated*, which recently won the 2012 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, a fitting recognition of its brilliant depiction of the Manassas High School Tigers' 2009 football season; and

WHEREAS, directors T.J. Martin and Dan Lindsay, who shot the film over the course of more than a year and benefitted greatly from the assistance of the Memphis and Shelby County Film and Television Commission, were joined in the endeavor of bringing this masterpiece to life by producers Rich Middlemas, Ed Cunningham, Seth Gordan, Glen Zipper, and Sean Combs. The documentary will see a nationwide release thanks to the efforts of the Weinstein Company; and

WHEREAS, the film began as a thirty-minute documentary on former Manassas lineman O.C. Brown, but quickly evolved into a full-length feature as the filmmakers uncovered the moving story of a struggling yet triumphant inner-city high school football team in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, while the film covers the 2009 season, which resulted in a 9-2 record for the Tigers, it chiefly illustrates how the athletic program built character and provided necessary life skills to at-risk youth, thanks to the positive mentoring of head coach Bill Courtney; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Coach Courtney graduated from the University of Mississippi and began teaching and coaching full-time before founding his own lumber company, Classic American Hardwoods, in 2001; and

WHEREAS, still possessed with an unwavering passion for coaching, he volunteered to coach the Manassas High School football team, a group of kids in dire need of a leader; and

WHEREAS, with hard work and determination, the team went from a six-year record of 6-54 to winning their first four games and earning a berth in the playoffs; and

WHEREAS, while many children in the community may have felt called to a life of crime, members of the Manassas team set their sights on college and careers; and

WHEREAS, the documentary features interviews with former Tigers O.C. Brown, Chavis Daniels, and Montrail "Money" Brown, who is currently training to become a fireman; and

WHEREAS, these players and their teammates gained a chance at a bright future due to the commitment and service of Coach Courtney and assistant coaches, Jim Tipton, Mike Ray, Carl Coleman, Jeff Germany, Mike Walker, Greg Hollenback, and Tommy Warren; and

WHEREAS, Bill Courtney now serves as the volunteer coach at St. George's Independent School, the Tennessee Division II state champion, and he continues to educate and encourage young men through the basic tenets of football, camaraderie, and sportsmanship; and

WHEREAS, the triumphant 2009 season of the Manassas High School Tigers, as portrayed in the 2012 Oscar-winning documentary *Undefeated*, perfectly exemplifies the tenacious spirit of the citizens of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend the directors and producers of the documentary film *Undefeated* on its capture of the 2012 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, applaud the young men of the 2009 Manassas High School football team featured in the film, and extend our best wishes for the future successes of all involved in this incredible, moving project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.